

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19

IO-14 NIC-01 DRC-01 /136 W

----- 103988

R 021713Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5419

SECDEF WASHDC

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY ROME

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MARR, GW

SUBJECT: FRG PROPOSES THAT DRAFTEES HAVE EASIER ACCESS
TO CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR STATUS

BEGIN SUMMARY: DEFENSE MINISTER LEBER HAS PROPOSED THAT
YOUNG GERMANS OF DRAFT AGE BE GIVEN EASIER ACCESS TO
CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR STATUS BEGINNING JANUARY 1, 1976.
MILITARY DRAFTEES WILL CONTINUE HAVING TO SERVE 15
MONTHS; THOSE CHOOSING CIVILIAN SERVICE ON GROUNDS OF
CONSCIENCE WILL HAVE TO SERVE 18 MONTHS. HE JUSTIFIED
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THE PROPOSAL LARGELY ON THE GROUNDS THAT MORE YOUNG MEN

ARE REACHING DRAFT AGE THAN ARE NEEDED BY THE MILITARY SERVICES. END SUMMARY

1. IN A SEPTEMBER 30 PRESS CONFERENCE, DEFENSE MINISTER LEBER POINTED OUT THAT APPROXIMATELY 300,000 YOUNG MEN WOULD BE AVAILABLE FOR MILITARY SERVICE EACH YEAR BEGINNING IN 1977. THE COMBINED REQUIREMENTS OF THE FEDERAL ARMED FORCES, BORDER POLICE, AND STATE POLICE ARE ABOUT 225,000 MEN YEARLY. LEBER ALSO POINTED OUT THAT VOLUNTARY RECRUITMENT IN THE ARMED FORCES HAS BEEN STEADILY INCREASING. THIS FACT HAS PREVIOUSLY BEEN COMMENTED ON BY OTHERS WHO FIND ITS ROOT CAUSES IN THE GENERAL SLOWDOWN OF THE GERMAN ECONOMY AND INCREASING UNEMPLOYMENT.

2. LEBER STATED THAT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF HIS PROPOSAL, WHICH HAD RECEIVED THE APPROVAL OF CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT, WOULD REQUIRE AN AMENDMENT TO THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC'S CONSCRIPTION ACT AND TO THE SOLDIERS' ACT. NO AMENDMENT OF THE BASIC LAW WOULD BE REQUIRED.

3. LEBER PROPOSED A SIMPLIFICATION OF PROCEDURES FOR RECOGNITION OF THE STATUS OF CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR. CURRENTLY APPLICATIONS FOR SUCH STATUS ARE EXAMINED BY INDEPENDENT EXAMINATION BOARDS WHICH INCLUDE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE FEDERAL ARMED FORCES AND FEDERAL DEFENSE MINISTRY. APPLICANTS MAY HAVE RECOURSE TO SPECIAL CHAMBERS OF APPEAL. EACH YEAR APPROXIMATELY 20,500 OUT OF A TOTAL OF 35,000 APPLICANTS HAVE THEIR STATUS AS CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS APPROVED. UNDER THE NEW PROCEDURES PROPOSED BY MINISTER LEBER, THE NUMBER OF SLOTS AVAILABLE FOR SUBSTITUTE CIVILIAN SERVICE WILL BE INCREASED TO 35,000. IN ADDITION, THE INDEPENDENT EXAMINATION BOARDS WILL NO LONGER HAVE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE FEDERAL ARMED SERVICES OR THE FEDERAL DEFENSE MINISTRY SITTING ON THEM. FINALLY, AN APPLICANT WHOSE CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR STATUS WAS DENIED, WILL HAVE THE RIGHT TO APPEAL TO THE REGULAR ADMINISTRATIVE COURTS.

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R 021713Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5420

SECDEF WASHDC

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

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4. LEBER EMPHASIZED THAT HIS PROPOSED CHANGES WOULD NOT
HARM THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE FEDERAL ARMED FORCES.

5. OPPOSITION SPOKESMAN CRITICIZED THE PROPOSAL ON THE
GROUNDS THAT HOW MANY CONSCRIPTS WOULD TAKE ADVANTAGE
OF THE EASIER PROCEDURES WAS UNKNOWN. THUS, THEY
CLAIMED, IT WAS NOT CLEAR WHETHER THE PERSONNEL REQUIRE-
MENTS OF THE FEDERAL ARMED FORCES WOULD BE MET AS THE
GOVERNMENT CLAIMED.

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6. COMMENT:

THE INCREASED FRG BIRTH RATE OF

THE '50S IS RESULTING IN MORE DRAFT AGE MEN THAN THE
ARMED SERVICES CAN ABSORB WITHIN CURRENT
BUDGETARY AND PERSONNEL LIMITATIONS. INCREASED
OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALTERNATIVE CIVILIAN SERVICES CAN
PROVIDE A POLITICALLY-ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION TO THE
PROBLEM. GERMAN DEFENSE OFFICIALS
HAVE BEEN HEARTENED BY THE INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF
VOLUNTEERS FOR THE ARMED FORCES AND BY THE INCREASED
PROFESSIONALISM OF THE FORCES. THEY DO NOT FORESEE ANY
DIFFICULTY IN MAINTAINING EXISTING FORCE LEVELS DESPITE
EASIER ACCESS TO CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR STATUS.
HILLENBRAND

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